

This document was released under the Access to Information Act on 2009-07-20 12:00:00.
Document released by the Canadian Government.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR-HQ-088-68

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE "ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY"
PRODUCTS

TORONTO -- 9 November, 1988 -- The federal government will develop a new purchasing initiative to encourage the procurement of products classified and labelled as environmentally friendly.

The announcement, by Supply and Services Minister Otto Jelinek and Environment Minister Tom McMillan, will put the federal government's massive purchasing clout behind the new Environmentally-Friendly Products Program.

Through this initiative, the government aims to encourage the development of safe, quality products. These include products that are recyclable, made from recycled materials, biodegradable, or free of chemicals (CFCs, halons) that destroy the ozone layer.

"I have instructed my officials to amend, where possible, our purchasing practices to encourage the competitive procurement of goods that qualify for environmentally-friendly labelling," Mr. Jelinek said. Mr. Jelinek has also instructed the Canadian General Standards Board to work with Environment Canada to identify products which could be included in this program.

An advisory panel to the Minister of the Environment, composed of representatives from various sectors and chaired by Pat Delbridge of Toronto, will help determine the performance criteria that products will have to meet. The Canadian Standards Association provides technical advice to the panel.

.../2

Canada

The Environmentally-Friendly logo, unveiled today, will begin appearing on products in spring 1989. The logo -- three doves entwined to form a stylized maple leaf -- was overwhelmingly selected by Canadians during a national campaign, held in late September.

Each dove represents a sector of society - consumer, industry and government. The doves intertwine, symbolizing that these sectors must work together to improve the quality of Canada's environment.

"This government will set the example for business and consumers alike," Mr. Jelinek said. "Good environmental practice is good business. Already, this campaign is being supported by private sector leaders and Canada's environmental community."

"Government has a crucial role in both regulating and enforcing environmental standards," Mr. McMillan said. "But laws alone cannot secure our environmental future. Environmental awareness must be an integral part of our culture and this program helps to foster that awareness. Our government is committed to leading by example through its own purchasing practices."

"The purpose of our program is to empower consumers to make rational decisions, to encourage the commercial development of better, less harmful products, and to help tackle problems of waste management and pollution.

"We already know from the private sector that manufacturers, producers, packagers and retailers are interested in supporting this campaign. They clearly see a commercial interest in doing so. No one wants to be on the wrong side of the public's strong desire for environmental protection," Mr. McMillan said.

-30-

For more information:

Terry Collins
Office of the Minister
Environment Canada
(819) 997-1441

(Aussi disponible en français)

Rick Prokopanko *Don Smith*
Office of the Minister
Supply & Services Canada
(819) 997-5421

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS PROGRAM: HOW THE PROGRAM WILL WORK

The Environmentally-Friendly Program functions through the interaction of three principal groups: an Advisory Panel; the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), which acts as the technical and attestation body; and a Secretariat, located for the present within the CSA. These groups are intended to eventually operate the program at arm's length from government and industry.

During the early stages of the program, however, Environment Canada will provide support and advice to the Panel as required.

The Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel consists of 14 members, representing various sectors of society and regions of the country. The panel's principal duties are:

- to screen proposed product types or categories and to determine which should be passed for further scrutiny, via the CSA Technical Committee.
- to evaluate comments by interested citizens, both private and corporate, on the advisability of including the proposed product category in the program and on appropriate environmental standards or performance criteria for each category.
- to review the CSA technical committee's recommendations on the proposed categories and environmental criteria, in consultation with expert witnesses, as necessary.
- to approve product types and their environmental standards (performance criteria) for inclusion in the program. (In some instances, the panel may agree that further study is needed before a decision can be made. This position must be confirmed by two-thirds of the panel members.)
- to recommend that the Minister of the Environment issue appropriate Product Category Guidelines under section 8 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Panel members are appointed for two years, with extension or re-appointment possible. The panel is appointed under Section 5(1)(a) of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). The functions to be performed will eventually be specified under the same section.

The panel holds at least two, initially four, one-day meetings per 12-month period.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

The CSA is the independent testing and certification agency for the program. It manages the public review of proposed product categories, including performance criteria; verifies that submitted products meet the criteria for their category; and signs the licensing agreements with the manufacturers of products qualifying for the label on behalf of Environment Canada.

The Secretariat

The permanent Secretariat which will initially be located within the CSA, provides administrative support to the Advisory Panel. The Secretariat processes all submissions for attestation and proposals for product categories and publicizes the work of the panel.

Environment Canada

The Department will work closely with the Advisory Panel in the early stages of the program and act as advisor. Until the program becomes self-supporting, Environment Canada will support the costs of the program.

The Process

1. The Secretariat receives suggestions for product categories -- types of products -- and passes them to Advisory Panel members in time for their next meeting in the form of proposed guidelines. Such products may be biodegradable, packaged in recycled or recyclable material, or free of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.
2. The Advisory Panel reviews the suggested categories and prepares a prioritized list of those which are judged appropriate for technical review.
3. The Secretariat arranges for a Ministerial announcement of these draft guidelines and authorizes the CSA to carry out the technical review process.

4. The CSA solicits initial comments on the draft guidelines from the appropriate business associations. Public hearings may be scheduled, if warranted. After the public review, the CSA submits a report to the panel.
5. The Panel reviews all relevant information received from the CSA Technical Committee, public comment and expert witnesses, as necessary, and decides, whether or not the category will be accepted into the program or referred for further review.
6. Accepted categories are published in Part I of the Canada Gazette. An appropriate Ministerial announcement invites manufacturers, who believe that their product meets the criteria, to submit application for attestation to the CSA.
7. The CSA receives applications from the manufacturer, who pays for the appropriate testing/verification of the product. If the product meets the criteria, the CSA enters into a licensing agreement (normally 3 years) with the manufacturer. An annual licensing fee, proportional to the retail sales value, is paid by the manufacturer to the Receiver General of Canada.
8. The Secretariat arranges for an appropriate Ministerial announcement of the signing of the licensing agreement. This would coincide with the arrival of the labelled product in the marketplace.

- 30 -

Further information:

Bettylynn Stoops
Environment Canada
(819) 953-2962

Gordon Harris
Environment Canada
(819) 997-6555

(Aussi disponible en français)